



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Northern District of Illinois
Western Division*

*Joseph C. Pedersen
Assistant U.S. Attorney*

*308 West State Street - Room 300
Rockford, Illinois 61101*

*PH: (815) 987-4444
FAX: (815) 987-4236*

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THREE OREGON MEN INDICTED ON FEDERAL ARSON CHARGE

ROCKFORD -- PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; ANDREW L. TRAVER, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, & Explosives; JOHN B. ROE, Ogle County State's Attorney; DAVID B. FOREMAN, Illinois State Fire Marshal; and DARIN DEHAAN, Chief of the Oregon Police Department, today made the following announcement:

On December 18, 2007, a federal grand jury in Rockford indicted **SAMER J. ALJBARI** age 21, 204 W. Washington Street, Oregon, Illinois; **MATTHEW R. MCMEEKAN**, age 19, 1006 Monroe Street, Oregon, Illinois; and **CHRISTOPHER R. TAYLOR**, age 18, 309 W. Center Street, Mt. Morris, Illinois, for trying to burn down a business located at 210 South Fourth Street, Oregon, Illinois, on October 4, 2007.

Aljabari, McMeekan and Taylor were arrested today and appeared before United States Magistrate Mahoney for their initial appearance. Aljabari is being held in federal custody pending a detention hearing on December 20, 2007 at 3:00 p.m. McMeekan and Taylor were both ordered to be released pending trial. If convicted of the charge, each defendant faces a minimum sentence of 5 years and a maximum potential sentence of up to 20 years in prison without parole, and a fine of up to \$250,000. If convicted, the actual sentence will be determined by a United States District Court Judge, guided by the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The case was investigated by the Rockford office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives and the Oregon Police Department, with the assistance of the Illinois State Fire Marshal's Office and the Ogle County Sheriff's Department. The case is being prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorney Joseph C. Pedersen.

Members of the public are reminded that a criminal indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are entitled to a fair trial at which time the government has the burden of proving their guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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